

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

161156Z Jan 04

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000300

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: INCIRLIK AND OIF-2: TURKS REITERATE THAT ROTATION  
ACTIVITIES ARE TO BE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO GOT'S "RULES  
AND PRINCIPLES"

REF: A) ANKARA 17 B) SILVERMAN-DEUTSCH 12/31/2003

E-MAIL C) 03 ANKARA 8015 D) 03 ANKARA 7800

E) ANKARA 224

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (B and  
D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) MFA DDG for the Americas Ilicak summoned Pol-Mil  
Counselor to the MFA January 15 to reiterate the GOT's  
understanding that the activities related to the rotation  
will be conducted in accordance with the rules/principles  
outlined by the Turks. The MFA appears to have done so in  
response to the barrage of unmanaged criticism from the  
opposition and the media over the GOT's handling of the  
rotation issue. Operations at Incirlik are running smoothly  
and we do not envision that changing as a result of the note.  
Post does not believe we need to respond formally to the  
note. End summary.

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CONCERN OVER US RESPONSE TO GOT'S ROTATION PRINCIPLES  
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2. (C) MFA DDG for the Americas Suna Ilicak summoned Pol-Mil  
Counselor to the MFA January 15 to voice concerns about the  
USG's response (ref a) to the GOT's rules and principles  
regarding the use of Incirlik Air Base (IAB) to rotate US  
personnel in and out of Iraq (ref d). During the meeting,  
Ilicak handed over a diplomatic note (see para 7 for text)  
that reiterates the GOT's understanding that the activities  
related to the rotation will be conducted within the confines  
of the "Rules and Principles to be Applied during Rotation  
Activities" that were attached to the diplomatic note the MFA  
handed over to us December 19, 2003 (ref d).

3. (C) Ilicak opened the meeting by noting that the MFA had  
gone to great lengths in its deliberations with other GOT  
entities to work out a "special status" for the rotation. In  
the GOT's eyes, the rules and principles attached to the  
MFA's December 19, 2003 diplomatic note accorded US forces  
"maximum flexibility" to carry out rotation-related  
activities. She said the internal GOT deliberation process  
was "not easy," given the legal constraints and concerns  
expressed by other GOT entities. Ilicak added that the GOT  
purposefully crafted its December 19 diplomatic note with  
"constructive ambiguity" in mind to allow both sides the  
flexibility they needed. Ilicak argued that, in contrast,  
some of the language contained in the Embassy's January 2,  
2004 diplomatic note -- particularly the reference to the  
"Tax Relief Agreement of 1954 as amended and applied" -- was  
not helpful to the MFA's efforts to be flexible. "You could  
have made our lives a lot easier by not including this  
language in your note and instead responded with a simple  
acknowledgment of our note," she said. Speaking "off the  
record," Ilicak said the MFA had no choice but to respond  
formally to the US diplomatic note and reiterate the GOT's  
understanding that the rules and principles outlined in the  
MFA's December 19 note were to be applied during the course  
of the rotation operation. "If someone were to demand that  
the MFA open its files and see that the MFA accepted your  
note without responding, our careers could be ruined."

4. (C) Ilicak said FM Gul and the entire GOT were under heavy  
criticism from the opposition and the media for authorizing  
on their own the use of IAB for the rotation. (Note: late  
January 14, the MFA issued a press statement explaining that  
the GOT on its own made the decision to allow the US to use  
IAB, that all of the appropriate authorities had been  
consulted, and that the decision was based on UNSCRs 1483 and

1511. The statement thus far has not received wide coverage and therefore did little to lessen the criticism in the daily papers January 15. TGS is planning to address this issue publicly January 16. End note.)

15. (C) PMA Counselor said the USG appreciated Turkey's decision to allow us to use IAB. The operations at Incirlik thus far were going smoothly and acceptable arrangements had been worked out. While we appreciated the legal and other constraints the GOT may have faced in deciding to authorize us to use IAB, the US also faced constraints that required us to conduct the operation under existing agreements. PMA Counselor noted that in the past, the US and Turkey had had different views about the applicability of existing agreements to the use of IAB. In those cases, we were able to work out practical operating procedures to address concerns or problems that occurred. He added that the Embassy had drafted its diplomatic note with this past in mind.

16. (C) Comment: The GOT's decision to issue a formal response to our diplomatic note and reiterate its position that Turkey's understanding of the rules and principles applies to all rotation-related activities was driven by the barrage of unmanaged criticism of the GOT's handling of this issue by the opposition party and the media (ref e). Nonetheless, the rotation is running smoothly and we do not envision that changing as a result of the note. Therefore, we do not believe the USG needs to respond formally to the note. End comment.

17. (C) Begin text of diplomatic note number ALGY/2004-16:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and with reference to the Ministry's Note No.: ALGY/2003-316 dated December 19, 2003 and the Embassy's Note No.: 003 date January 2, 2004 has the honor to inform the following:

The Ministry would like to reiterate her understanding to the effect that the activities related to the rotation of the US personnel in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom through Incirlik Air Base will be conducted within the confines of the Rules and Principles to Be Applied During Rotation Activities<sup>8</sup> as attached to the Ministry's aforementioned Note.

The issue of flight clearance will continue to be handled in line with the contents of the Turkish General Staff document dated December 31, 2003 and No.: 1523-1732-03/Kom.Kont.D:(Hv.Svn.S.) (2)33412154.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

End text.  
EDELMAN